quality are procured. These biological (vaccine/serum) whether indigenously produced or imported cannot be marketed unless their quality is certified by the Central Drug Laboratory at Kasauli. There has been no complaint about the quality of these vaccines.

Anti-rabies immunoglobulin is life saving medicine for passive immunization and provides the immediate availability of neutralizing antibodies at the site of bite to tide over the initial phase of infection before the patient begins to produce his or her own antibodies after anti-rabies vaccination. Hence, national and international (WHO) guidelines recommend administration of immunoglobulin in all category III exposures and category II exposure in immune compromised patients.

Equine rabies immunoglobulin (ERIG) is one of the products available for passive immunization. ERIG currently manufactured are potent, highly purified, safe and not expensive. These are used in the countries where rabies continues to be major public health problem.

Effect of economic recession on railways

†*280. SHRI PRABHAT JHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railways have also been affected by the economic recession, which has pervaded almost all the sectors in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that freightage has been adversely affected due to this; and

(d) if so, the details thereof for the last one year ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. Transportation is a derived demand based on the growth in the economy. In the year 2007-08, loading on Indian Railways was 794.21 million tonnes, which was 65.44 million tonnes & 8.98% more than the loading of 728.77 million tonnes in 2006-07. In the period April-September'08, loading was 8.55% more than the loading in corresponding period of 2007.

However, in the month of October 2008, freight loading registered a negative growth of 0.14% over corresponding month of last year. In November 2008 also, the increment was only 1.29% over last year which is below our expectations.

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WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTION

Spreading of stem rust fungal disease in wheat

2015. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether to prevent any occurrence of the stem rust fungal disease in wheat which has rapidly spread in parts of the African Countries and beyond, the ICAR has formed a special team to survey and monitor the wheat crop in parts of the country;

(b) if so, the details of the recommendations made by the special team;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether the ICAR has taken any further action to protect wheat from such disease in future; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) formed a special team to survey and monitor the summer crop of wheat (off season crop) in the first week of August 2008. The team travelled extensively during August 2008 to monitor the presence of different diseases of wheat crop covering the route from Shimla to summer nursery at Dalang Maidan in Lahul and Spiti valley of Himachal Pradesh through Tabo, Kaza and Kunzum Pass. No trace of stem rust race Ug 99 was found in the wheat crop during this survey.

(c) and (d) So far, Ug 99 race of stem rust of wheat has been not reported in India. The ICAR has taken proactive steps and arranged screening of newly released Indian wheat varieties as well varieties in pipe line against Ug 99 race of stem rust under epiphytotic conditions of disease in Kenya during last two crop seasons and identified resistant varieties. Few of them are: HD2781, DL788-2, HI-977, HS295 and HUW-234. Breeding lines having resistance to Ug 99 are also in pipeline.

Improvement of crops production

2016.DR. V. MAITREYAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total expected production of paddy, wheat and sugar in the country during the current year;

(b) what is the total demand of these products in the country during the current year;

(c) what steps are being taken to improve the situation of the stocks of these products;

(d) whether Government has undertaken any new methods to increase the yield of these products per hectare across the country; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) During the current year i.e., 2008-09, the production of paddy (kharif season) and sugar are estimated at 124.88 million tonnes and 20.50 million tonnes respectively. As the sowing of wheat which is a Rabi crop is in progress, its production for 2008-09 has not been estimated so far.

As per estimates of Working Group of Planning Commission for the 11th Five Year Plan (based on the behaviourstic approach), the demand of paddy and wheat for the year 2008-09 have been estimated at 139.31 million tonnes and 72.72 million tonnes respectively. The demand for sugar during the current year is estimated at 22.00 million tonnes.

(c) The opening stock of sugar as on 1st October 2008 are provisionally at 10.50 lakh tonnes and appropriate steps are taken to improve the stock position of sugar as and when the situation